

City of Springfield
Work Session Meeting

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING OF
THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL HELD
MONDAY, MAY 15, 2006

The City of Springfield Council met in a work session in the Jesse Maine Meeting Room, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, Oregon, on Monday, May 15, 2006 at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Leiken presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Mayor Leiken and Councilors Fitch, Ballew, Lundberg, Ralston, Woodrow and Pishioneri. Also present were City Manager Gino Grimaldi, Assistant City Manager Cynthia Pappas, City Attorney Joe Leahy, City Recorder Amy Sowa and members of the staff.

1. Public Safety November 2006 Special Property Tax Levies.

Finance Director Bob Duey presented the staff report on this item. At the April 17 Council meeting, Councilors Fitch and Lundberg volunteered to work with staff to develop additional options for securing funding for jail operations. The purpose was to review the progress that had been made to date on identifying a preferred alternative for securing jail operations funding and to provide suggestions to Council on how to proceed with finding a preferred alternative. A recommendation has been prepared and will be presented at the May 15 work session.

Mr. Duey said he would be discussing operations of the jail and the proposed levies. He reviewed the recommendations that had come to Council from the Jail Operations Task Force. The subcommittee took into consideration the options and looked at what had already been considered.

Mr. Duey reviewed the costs and positions needed for operations of the jail. He said the operational opening date for the jail would be in Mid-2010. He discussed the revenue options to help offset jail operations funding, such as booking fees, telephone charges, and cancellation of the Lane County Jail contract. The remaining funds needed could be collected through the proposed levy. He said the Subcommittee recommended combining the Police and Jail Levy and putting it before the voters. The change proposed on the levy was to make it a five year levy with a delayed effective date. He explained why that option was chosen relating to the opening of the jail.

Mr. Duey said the Police portion of the levy was nearly the same as the current levy in terms of staffing. He said the cost for the Police portion would equal about .75 per thousand. The Jail portion would equal about .34 per thousand. He said Council would also be considering whether or not to put the renewal of the Fire levy on the ballot in November 2006. He discussed the FTE (full time equivalent) rate included in the Fire levy and the flexibility it provided. He said the cost for the Fire levy would be about .40 per thousand.

Mr. Duey referred to the Business License program. That proposal had been before Council over the last several months through the public hearing process. He said it was on the agenda for tonight's Regular meeting because the public hearing had been scheduled for a continued public

hearing. Part of the jail funding recommendation from the Subcommittee was not to include the Business License. Council could open the public hearing and then take no action or vote no on the Business License at this time.

Mayor Leiken reminded Council that in 2002, the Fire levy passed with 60 percent of the vote and the Police levy passed with 56 percent of the vote. Public Safety continued to be a priority to the citizens today. He discussed the issue of funding for Lane County and said the idea of a Municipal Jail in Springfield was more important than ever.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if the Jail would have supervisors twenty four hours a day/seven days a week (24/7).

Police Chief Jerry Smith said supervisors, or lead workers, would be on staff 24/7. There could be times, however, when a lead worker was out and someone else would have to be added.

Councilor Pishioneri said he would prefer to over estimate the number of staff needed rather than under estimate. The number listed was only 13 and he felt there should be at least 15. He explained why. He asked how much more it would cost to add two more positions.

Mr. Duey said it would be approximately .05 or .06 per thousand. He said substantial overtime had been included in the original amount. Some of that overtime could be traded out for one position.

Councilor Pishioneri said he was still concerned about being understaffed, employees getting burned out or not being able to take their vacations.

Councilor Ballew asked if there was a post position ratio.

Councilor Pishioneri said there were three positions: one who controlled the doors and did not come into contact with the inmates, one who worked in the housing units among the inmates, and one who could assist when the officer in the housing unit got jumped by an inmate or act as back-up.

Councilor Ballew asked how many positions it took for 24/7 coverage.

Councilor Pishioneri said it took 5.3 employees for one 24/7 position.

Mr. Duey asked Councilor Pishioneri if a jail generated much overtime.

Councilor Pishioneri discussed different situations that called for overtime, most often for unscheduled leave such as sick leave.

Dennis Liebert, Consultant from Liebert and Associates, agreed. He said the smaller the jail, the more chance there would be vacancies which would increase overtime for existing employees. He said in his program he had recommended 15 officers.

Councilor Pishioneri discussed the issue of hiring new employees, training them and the added time that put on the other officers. Training new employees would be expensive and that needed to be considered.

Councilor Fitch asked if there was any cross training that could occur with Community Service Officers to help when vacancies and illness occurred. She asked if it was different than firefighters and paramedics.

Chief Smith said it would be difficult because of certification requirements. He said they had looked at this with minimum staffing, and there could be times during the day when there would only be two staff on duty. He said Mr. Liebert was correct when he said the smaller the facility, the more chance there would be vacancies or shortages of staff due to illness, etc. He said cross training would be a real challenge for these positions. He said he would prefer to see the Jail outside the Police union. He explained the benefit in that. He said there were some things to be explored to keep the costs down.

Councilor Pishioneri said there was the option to create a pool of control officers versus creating a separate classification that could be restricted to running control rather than the security element of the facility. Those positions could be at a lower wage, but all wages needed to be comparable. He explained.

Councilor Ballew asked who would do the intake.

Councilor Pishioneri said it would be the second officer. He said they would also be doing things like handling attorney visits, bookings, releases and property issues.

Councilor Ballew discussed the ballot title and asked if the section which stated "The City Council has stated that it would not construct the jail portion of the justice center if funds for the jail operation are not secured". She thought the voters had voted on that.

Mr. Duey said that statement was a separate resolution, but was not in the original ballot title.

Councilor Fitch said that she and Councilor Lundberg had discussed the levy and although they did not prefer to use this option, it was necessary to put it out to the voters to reaffirm that this was what they wanted. It was time in terms of the planning to have the answer one way or another. The year delay in the levy allowed the jail to be opened and running long enough to know actual operating costs. She said Mr. Duey and staff had been conservative on the revenues that could come in from court revenues, booking and jail bed charges. Having it as a Public Safety Levy allowed some flexibility of staffing with the Police if needed. She said this was not a perfect answer, but was the best with what they had available.

Councilor Lundberg said she had sat in on the County Committee and the Jail Operations Committee. She said they had looked at every option and had paired it down to good estimates. She said levies were understood by citizens. Putting the Police and Jail into one levy did allow some options in the use of the dollars. She said Council needed clear direction on whether or not the Jail would be built. She said the figures were much more solid on the costs and expected revenues. This option also put the Fire levy in an alternate cycle for renewal.

Councilor Woodrow thanked Councilors Lundberg and Fitch for their work on the Subcommittee. He said Council had done everything they could to find a way to fund the Jail and we were just a little bit short. He agreed that it was time to go to the citizens for their answer. He agreed with Councilor Pishioneri about the need to have 15 employees in the Jail, but noted the overtime and

flexibility of staffing that could equate to 15 employees. He said he was in favor of the Business License tax. The levy was not his first choice, but was necessary and it was time to hear from the citizens. He said he would support the levies.

Councilor Ralston asked if money used for the Police Department could be transferred to retraining an employee for the Jail if needed.

Mr. Smith said that could be done.

Mr. Duey said the levy was written to address services provided. It could be used to fully fund the police officers the first three years, and then be moved to fund personnel for the Jail once it was opened.

Councilor Ralston said once the Jail was opened and running, there could be less need for as many officers on the street. He said he had supported combining the Police and Jail levy from the beginning and he was glad that was being proposed. He said citizens had told the City that public safety was important to them. It was even more important now with cuts Lane County would be making. He said he would like to add one more officer in the Jail and cover the rest with overtime, but that could be dealt with at a later date. He said he was in support of a Business License as a way to track businesses that were operating in our City. He said it didn't need to be a tax, and now could be a good time to get it started.

Councilor Lundberg said she would prefer to table the Business License at this time because it would appear it was tied to public safety, even if it wasn't. She said it also needed a lot more work before it could become advantageous to the City and business. She said they chose to put the measures out now to give time to educate the public, giving the proposal the best chance at the polls in the fall.

Councilor Fitch said the Business License was a good idea, but she would support delaying the action at this time to allow time to work with the Chamber so it was meaningful. There were too many questions regarding the Business License. She would like to see it refined so that it was beneficial and gave the City the information it needed. She said the focus was on public safety and making sure we had the police on the street to respond and a facility to house those that were found guilty.

Councilor Ralston said he would go along with delaying the Business License. He discussed the issue of businesses coming into town without anyone knowing. He discussed the Fire levy and asked about the staffing.

Fire Chief Dennis Murphy said the term full time equivalent (FTE) meant equivalent of either a person or the overtime to fill the gap. He said the preferred model is the less expensive model of nine employees with the three FTE used for overtime, which was currently in use. He explained.

Councilor Ralston said he agreed with that model for cost savings. He said personally he preferred getting overtime rather than a raise in pay.

Councilor Pishioneri noted that the figure of 15 staff members was actually still low, as the actual number was 16.89. He wanted the levy to reflect adequate FTE to run the Jail without making

people work too much overtime. He felt that 13 were not enough, but he would put it to the voters.

Mayor Leiken discussed the under-assessed value of property in Springfield and the real market value. He asked Mr. Duey how much involvement the Lane County Assessor had in the assessed value of our community compared to the State.

Mr. Duey said there were two ways the assessors put in values. The first was existing value, and they were locked in by the three percent by the State. To change that, the County Assessor would need to work with assessors from the other counties around the State to lobby against the rules of Measure 50. He said the local assessor could have some influence regarding assessment on new construction.

Mayor Leiken said the market value of new construction in Springfield was nearly equal with Eugene. In time, there could be some difference in valuation which could be a benefit once the jail was open. He referred to a chart Mr. Duey had presented at a former meeting that showed the tax revenue that would come to the City once certain businesses came off the Enterprise Zone. That increase may be enough so the Jail operations portion of the levy would not have to be renewed.

Councilor Fitch reminded Council that if the Police levy was defeated, no jail would be built. That message needed to be relayed. There was a high risk, but public safety needed to include a penalty for not abiding by the law.

All Councilors acknowledged the risk.

Mayor Leiken referred to remarks from the District Attorney that even if Springfield were to build a jail and Lane County was at full operations, the region would still be about 300 beds short based on the growth of the area.

Councilor Pishioneri said word was spreading throughout the population of offenders and there was concern from them that this jail could be built.

Councilor Lundberg said she wanted to make everything clear during the public session that if this was defeated the Jail would not be built. Council had done everything they could to find funding options.

Mr. Duey said there were two draft ballot titles in the Agenda Packet, one for the Public Safety Levy and one for the Fire Levy. Those ballot titles had been sent up to the Secretary of State's Office for review and very minor changes were made. New ballot titles would be at Council places during the Regular Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:45 pm.

Minutes Recorder – Amy Sowa

Sidney W. Leiken
Mayor

Attest:

Amy Sowa
City Recorder